



THE FIRST ROSA

TEACHER | CONFESSOR | CHURCH PLANTER

ADULT BIBLE STUDY

OPENING PRAYER

Dear Lord, as we watch *The First Rosa*, open our hearts and minds so that we may hear Your Word and heed Your call to serve in the Great Commission. Work within each of us, so that we may go and tell others of Your love, for the harvest is plenty but the workers are few. We give You thanks that all our sins are washed away by the blood of Jesus Christ, Your Son, in whose name we pray. Amen.

START VIDEO

ICEBREAKER

What surprised you in *The First Rosa*? Were any parts of the film difficult to watch?

Given her trials, how difficult do you think it was for Rosa J. Young to live out her calling?

How important was it to Rosa that Jesus was a constant presence in her life?

It has been more than 65 years since the publication of Rosa J. Young's autobiography, *Light in the Dark Belt*. How has the world changed since then? How has it stayed the same?

BIBLE STUDY

Rosa Young's life was infused with *tentatio* (trial), *meditatio* (study), and *oratio* (prayer). These three define the life of a theologian. Scripture tells us how important these are—not only for the life of Rosa Young, but also for our own lives.

Tentatio is a fact of life. No one is immune. The question is whether we turn to God in our time of trouble. Rosa Young wrestled with *tentatio* her entire life: when she grew up in the era of Jim Crow, when she tried to open her first school, when boll weevils nearly closed her school, and when enemies accused her and friends turned their backs on her. Each time, however, she came through stronger, having relied on the grace of God.

St. Paul learned this lesson through his "thorn in the flesh."



READ 2 COR. 12:5-10.

1. What does it mean for power to be "made perfect in weakness"? Whose weakness? Whose power?

2. God gave St. Paul this thorn in the flesh to keep him from becoming conceited. How can success, even in telling others about Jesus, cause us to become conceited? How can *tentatio* (trial) prevent us from becoming "puffed up" (cf. HAB. 2:4; 1 COR. 8:1-3)?

READ 1 COR. 4:1-7.

St. Paul understood how easily an entire community could become "puffed up." Whenever there is division in a community, St. Paul writes, there is a risk of becoming "puffed up in favor of one against another" (4:6). One source of division between individuals or entire groups of people is when we "go beyond what is written" (4:6).

3. How easy is it for a church to face division? Have you ever witnessed factions or cliques within the church? Do you think it's biblical? Then why does it happen?

4. Since division can be caused by going "beyond what is written," how important is *meditatio* for the unity of a community (e.g., through confirmation, Sunday school, adult Bible study, missionaries, DCEs, or theologically trained pastors)?

In the Academy-nominated documentary, *A Time for Burning*, Lutherans in Omaha are followed as they struggle to realize Christian fellowship and reconciliation in 1966, during a time of civil unrest. In bringing together members from different congregations from different backgrounds and different parts of town, not everyone was comfortable. One member said, "Pastor,

I want them to have everything I have. I want God to bless them as much as He blesses me. I just can't be in the same room with them. It bothers me.”

When God told Jonah to go to the great city of Nineveh to bring His Word to those people, Jonah was bothered. To resist the call of God, Jonah ran the other way. Yet God sought him out. After rejecting God's call to teach and preach (*meditatio*), Jonah underwent trial (*tentatio*) in the belly of the fish, where he turned to God in prayer (*oratio*).

READ JONAH 2.

5. What is Jonah's prayer?

6. Can prejudice become an idol (2:8)? In what ways?

7. In what ways did Rosa Young and Nils Bakke face prejudice in their ministries? Why do you think they persevered, despite their trials and setbacks?

8. Have you ever been tempted to run the other way and resist the call of God?

9. How might prayer overcome our fears (cf. 1 JOHN 4:18-21)?

If you ever travel to Rosebud and turn down a short dirt road named Bonner, you will find Christ Lutheran Church — and, in front of it, the tombstone of Rosa J. Young. Engraved are the words of Matt. 28:19-20 (KJV),



the words of the Great Commission: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and

of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”

10. Give examples of how trial, study, and prayer are part of the Great Commission.



11. How might recruiting teachers and preachers be part of the Great Commission?

12. How can we continue the work begun by Dr. Rosa J. Young to “teach all nations”, whether locally or at institutions where she taught, like Concordia College Alabama, Selma, Ala.?

Closing Prayer

Dear Lord, thank You for the life and ministry of Rosa Young. May we continue in her work to reach and teach those in need and share the good news of Jesus Christ. Amen.